

Message Text

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ACTION ORM-02

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 DHA-02 IO-11 DPW-01 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 /074 W

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R 101330Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9953

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SHUM, PFOR, PINS, PINT, PORG, EAID, EFIN, BL

SUBJ: HUMAN RIGHTS IN BOLIVIA; 1976 REPORT REQUIREMENT

REF: (A) STATE 43519 (B) 75 STATE A-1045

(C) LA PAZ 8928 (D) LA PAZ 129

1. FOLLOWING IS A TELEGRAPHIC SUMMARY (REQUESTED PARA 10 REF A) OF LA PAZ A-24 REPORTING ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN BOLIVIAN WHICH WAS POUCHED TO THE DEPARTMENT ON MARCH 9, 1976.

2. THE EMBASSY CONCLUDES THAT THE SITUATION IN REGARD TO HUMAN RIGHTS IN BOLIVIA HAS IMPROVED DURING THE PAST YEAR. AT DIFFERENT TIMES DURING THIS PERIOD, THE BOLIVIAN GOVERNMENT HAS HAD ANYWHERE FROM 35 TO 150 PERSONS UNDER IMPRISONMENT FOR "POLITICAL REASONS" RANGING FROM ARMED TERRORISTS AND PAID AGITATORS, TO REAL OR POTENTIAL COUP PLOTTERS OR TO VOCAL OPPONENTS OF THE REGIME. SYSTEMATIC TORTURE AND ABUSE HAVE NOT TAKEN PLACE, ALTHOUGH CLEARLY ABRIDGMENTS OF CIVIL LIBERTIES AND VIOLATIONS OF THE RIGHTS TO BE PUBLICLY CHARGED AND FAIRLY TRIED HAVE OCCURRED AS HAVE SOME CASES OF PROLONGED DETENTION WITHOUT TRIAL. SEVERAL PEOPLE HAVE BEEN HELD FOR A FEW MONTHS. ONE OBSERVER

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ESTIMATED THAT ABOUT 10 POLITICAL PRISONERS HAD BEEN

DETAINED MORE THAN TEN MONTHS. APART FROM TWO MEMBERS OF THE URBAN TEACHERS LABOR ORGANIZATION, EMBASSY KNOWS OF NO LOCAL OR NATIONAL TRADE UNION LEADERS NOW BEING DETAINED FOR UNION ACTIVITIES IN BOLIVIA.

3. SITUATION IS MITIGATED BY THE AUTHORIZED AND UNIMPEDED ACCESS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH TO ALL POLITICAL DETAINEES (INCLUDING PERSONS INVOLVED IN ARMED SUBVERSION AND TERRORISM). FAMILIES NORMALLY CAN VISIT DETAINEES ONCE A WEEK. OBSERVERS OF BOLIVIA'S MODERN HISTORY COMMENT THAT PREVIOUS GOVERNMENTS DURING THE PAST FIFTY YEARS (POPULAR, MILITARY OR CONSTITUTIONAL) HAVE A VERY POOR RECORD REGARDING HUMAN RIGHTS. ARBITRARY ARRESTS, DETENTION, EXILE AND SERIOUS MISTREATMENT HAVE BEEN COMMONPLACE IN THE PAST. IT IS FROM THIS HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE THAT THE EMBASSY CONCLUDED THAT THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN BOLIVIA HAS IMPROVED.

4. EMBASSY OBSERVATIONS WERE BASED ON DISCUSSIONS WITH RELIABLE AND INFORMED OBSERVERS OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN BOLIVIA. THE LAST ICRC VISIT TOOK PLACE IN OCTOBER, 1975 AND VISITS OF THE CHURCH REPRESENTATIVES ARE ON A CONTINUING BASIS. WE HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT ICRC REPORTS ARE SENT TO GENEVA AND TO GOB, BUT EMBASSY DOES NOT REPEAT NOT HAVE COPIES. TO EMBASSY'S KNOWLEDGE, THERE ARE NO OTHER RECENT REPORTS ON BOLIVIA BY ORGANIZATIONS MENTIONED PARA 5 REF (A). STEDMAN

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